

TWVO SERMONS:

VVHEREIN VVE ARE
TAVGHT:

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--------|---------|---|--------------------|
| 1. | { | How to | { Get | { | a good Conscience. |
| 2. | | | { Keepe | | |
| 3. | | | { Vse | | |

Preached in Aldermanbury Church,
LONDON.

The Second Edition.

By ROBERT HARRIS.

I COR. 4. 3.

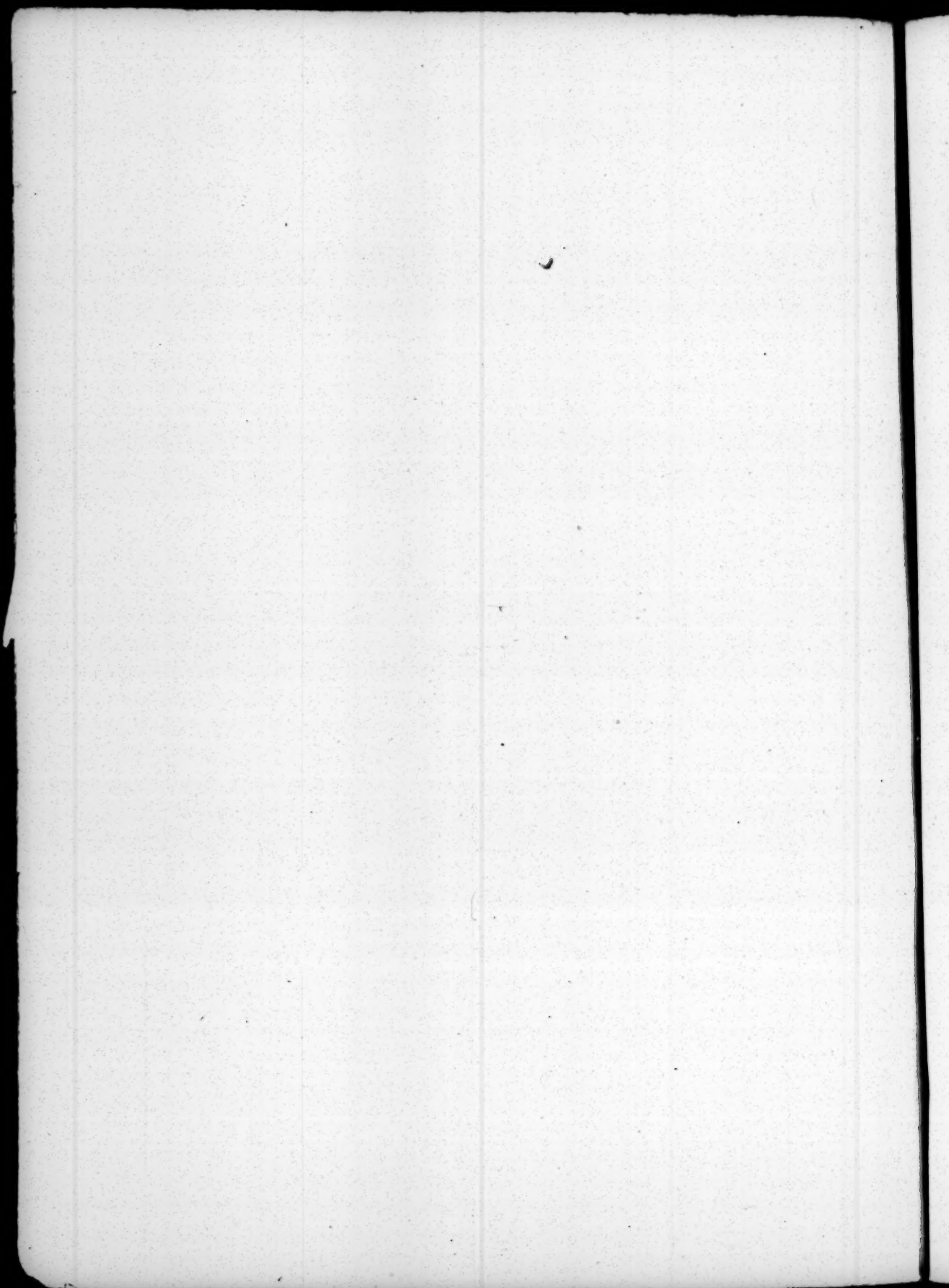
*With mee it is a very small thing that I should be iudged of you, or of
mans iudgement: yea, I iudge not mine owne selfe.*



LONDON,

Printed by R. Badger for Iohn Bartlet, and are to be sold
at his shop in Cheape-side at the Gilded Cup.

1632.





TO
THE PRINTER.



Hereas you request mee to enlarge my selfe in some passages of my former Sermons touching Conscience, against this new Impression : I haue resolued rather to adde two new Sermons of the same subiect, than to alter any thing in the old, and this I haue beene led vnto vpon these reasons: First, because I would haue you deale fairely with all men in the venting of Copies. Secondly, because that labour would haue bin as tedious to me as this. Thirdly, because I haue now added something touching the vse of Conscience, which my former

To the Printer.

*Text would not so fitly beare; My request
unto you is double; first, that you would be
carefull in obseruing stops, interrogations and
distinctions, which neglected, the sense be-
comes sometimes darke, sometimes imperfect
and none at all, as is to be seene in some passa-
ges of the Sermons on Prouerbs and Sa-
muel. Secondly, that you will seuer these so
from the former, as that whoso pleases may
haue them alone. Thus resting in your care
for the due publishing of all, I commend you
and the worke to the Lords blessing.*

Hanwell, Octob. 8.

Yours,

ROBERT HARRIS.



TVVO SERMONS,
wherein we are taught, 1. How
to get, 2. How to keepe, 3. How
to vse a good Conscience.

H E B. XIII. XVIII.

*Pray for vs , for wee trust wee haue a good
Conscience in all things, willing to liue ho-
nestly.*



OF the Apostles motion so
much: Followeth now his
reason; where, first, the As-
sertion, *I haue a good Consci-
ence in all things:] Secondly,*
the Euidence and confirmati-
on, *I am perswaded so:] vpon*
this ground, I desire to liue honestly. The points
we note are two: First, the Apostle secures the
B thing

2 Directions how to get, to keepe;
thing (*a good Conscience.*) Secondly, he rests in
the confirmation of it.

From the first this :

Doct.

Euery Christian should so order the matter,
that he may truly say, *I haue a good Conscience :*
This is the thing that must be made good, and as-
sured ; to wit, *a good conscience.* Here, lest it be
objected, that the point holds in such as the A-
postle was, (Preachers) who must be men of
Conscience, not in all ; Wee must doe two
things ; first, see what warrant we haue for the
raising ; next, for practizing of the point. Our
warrant for deducing a generall from this parti-
cular, is fetcht ; first, from the end and vse of the
word in generall, namely, our instruction, as ap-
peares, *Rom. 15. 4.* and *2 Tim. 3. 16.*

Secondly, from that generall precept of this
Apostle, *Phil. 4. 8, 9.* Furthermore, brethren, what-
soeuer things are true, whatsoeuer things are honest,
whatsoeuer things are iust, whatsoeuer things are
pure, whatsoeuer things pertaine to loue, whatsoeuer
things are of good report, if there be any vertue, if
there be any praise, thinke on these things, which yee
haue both learned, and receiued, and heard, and seene
in me : those things doe, and the God of peace shall be
with you.

Thirdly, from the like president, *Heb. 13. 5, 6.*
*Let your conuersation be without couetousnesse, and
be content with those things that yee haue : for hee
hath said, I will not faile thee, neither forsake thee :*
So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper,
neither

and to vse a good Conscience. 3

neither will I feare what man can doe vnto mee.
Whence the inference is to all from one, *Ioshuah.*

Fourthly, from Reason, though examples (as examples) simply binde not, yet reason and precept (that is to say, the Law of Nature and of God) doe binde: and therefore, when the Example is grounded vpon common equity, and hath nothing priuate in it (vnlesse haply for degree onely) and is backt by precept, then it's binding. Now thus stands the case here: First, A man, as he is rationall (much more as he is a Christian) is to regard his Conscience. Secondly, the Apostle, not onely in his Ministry, but in all other Relations and passages of life, minded this, *Acts* 23. 1. and 24. 16. nay, further, as his life was rised into by the aduersaries, with his Doctrine; so he Apologizes for that, with this; and grounds his perswasion, as much vpon his Christian liuing, as his faithfull preaching. Lastly, the precept reaches all, as well as Preachers: and ther's as good reason, why we as well as they, should assure conscience. For the first, the precept is no lesse large, than plaine; 1 *Precept.* first, for getting: secondly, keeping: thirdly vsing of a good Conscience.

For getting: wee are called vpon to wash the heart, *Ierem.* 4. 14. to wash off all filthinesse of spirit, *2 Cor.* 7. 1. to study vniuersall holinesse, *1 Thess.* 5. and the end of the Commandement is a good Conscience, *1 Tim.* 1, 5.

Secondly, for keeping: *Salomon* addresses him.

4 *Directions how to get, to keepe,*
himselfe to all and each particular, *Pro 4.23.*

Thirdly, for vsing: *Heb. 10.22* in all our approaches to God, wee must wash the Conscience, as the *Iewes* did their *flesh* and *raiment*.

2. *Reason.*

1. *Ab honeste.*

For the second: 1. Equity, 2. Necessity, 3. Vtility perswade the practice: First, wee are dependant, and therefore accountable as well as *Pauls*; soules we haue receiued, and for a soule and spirit must euery one answer: Lawes we haue also receiued, and by Law we must be iudged; we are under the same Iudge, the same Law, the same censure that others be, and must hold vp our hands at the same barre; and therefore must haue the same thoughts, and care of Conscience: Books must be compared, Gods and ours, Originall, and counter-pane: therefore we also must haue our Bookes fairely kept, and in a readinesse.

2. *A necessitate.*

Secondly, there lyes the same necessity vpon vs, as vpon *Pauls*, of securi: g Conscience: for first, if wee looke inward, wee shall find our hearts as crazy, our graces as feeble, our peace as vnsettled, as theirs: and on the other side, our secret guile, and guilt, and pride, and vnbeliefe, as great as theirs. And next, if wee looke outward, wee finde the world, the world still, that's a Sea, our life a warfare, wicked men as busie with others consciences as euer; the Diuell as malicious as euer; troubles without, terrors within, as stirring as euer: in short, as much

and to vse a good Conscience.

5

much vse and neede of a good Conscience now, as a thousand yeares ago; a Preacher may stand somewhat higher than our selues, but wee are in the same stormes, there's none other difference.

Thirdly, It will quit cost for vs also, to get good consciences: for, these are the preseruers of all graces; the Conscience is that bottome that containes all our treasure; that casket that holds all our Iewels; if this miscarry, farewell faith, hope, patience, courage, truth, all. Secondly, Conscience is the root of all our comfort: the fruit of righteousness (saith *Esay*) is peace: out of a cleere conscience, issue those sweet streames of ioy, comfort, &c. Thirdly, Conscience is the Antidote against all poysoned crosses; it is the sting that is in our consciences, that steeles all our crosses, and makes them stinging; there's little mudde raised in the soule, where the conscience is cleere and pure.

Fourthly, Conscience is the bulwarke, and wall of brasse, that keepes off all inuasions and assaults, *Ephe. 6*. By this a man raignes ouer all tribulations, *Rom 8*. and is enabled to looke flames in the face, Lions in the face, railers in the face, slanderers in the face, Diuels in the face, God in the face, with an vndaunted countenance, *1 Iohn 3.21. & 4.17*.

On the other side, take away conscience, and you plucke vp the sluces, and pull downe the

B 5

bankes,

6 *Directions how to get, to keepe,*

bankes, you let out the soule into all licentiousnesse; for what bounds hath the ingenuous spirit, when feare and shame (the immediate issues of conscience) are gone? Where will a man stay? Man without conscience, is a wild horse without a bridle; the life and heart is filled with sinne, after sinne comes guilt (from that light that's left) thence tormentfull shame, feare, anguish; hence the least noyse affrights him, the least crosse stings him, the least danger appals him; in short, rest there's none, peace none, courage none, comfort none; but conscience rages like an aking tooth: a man eates in paine, drinks in feare; dares not goe abroad, dares not goe to bedde, dares not sleepe, lest his dreames should prooue terrible; dares not vvake, lest his wounds should bleed againe, and his watchfull cares and feares recoyle. By this little sayd, you see how it imports vs all, as well as *Saint Paul*, to conne this lesson, and to say readily, I, and I, and I, and euery I, haue a good conscience. But all that can be sayd, is but an emptie discourse, and a contemplation farre off from the matter; for the truth is, no man can tell what the benefit of a good, what the misery of a bad conscience is, but he who hath felt both; that man is but a stranger to himselfe, and to conscience, that doth not apprehend a thousand times more, than hee can vtter in this kinde. It suffices to say, that no man knowes the badnesse of a bad, the goodnesse of a good conscience, but onely
he

and to vse a good Conscience.

he that hath felt the weight of that, and worth of this; and hee that knowes least experimentally and feelingly, knowes more than his tongue, face, eyes, hands, bones can vtter, though they speake all at once, as vsually they doe, when Conscience workes strongly. But I passe to application; where, first, three sorts come to be taxed; secondly, all to be taught.

For first, if all should aime at this, to say *Vses. 1.* (and to say truely) My Conscience is good, three sorts of men are farre wide of the marke.

First, they who neuer trouble their thoughts with conscience at all; credit, wealth, friends theyle secure, if they can: but for conscience, tis only a name, a scarcrow to affright children withall; but no wise man will stand vpon that: and lest they should seeme madde, they plead reason for their practice.

First, there's no man liuing, but he straines *Object. 1.* and dispenseth with conscience in some things: take me the best Preachers, doe not they speake, yeelde, walke contrary to conscience, in some things? Name me your best Christians: doe they not know censuring, enuy, &c. to bee naught? doe not they speake against some sometimes, whom in their consciences they know to be better men than themselves, and so of all the rest?

Thus they plead in the first place: but this is a wilfull delusion, for first, What if all the world

8 *Directions how to get, to keepe,*

Sol. World ranne wilde? *N O A H* will be *N O A H*,
vpright in his generation still. Secondly, Is it
well to straine? If not, wilt thou be naught for
companie. Thirdly, thou art deceiued, there
Luke 1. 6. is many a *Paul, Zacharie, Elizab*, that walke in
all the Commandements of God, and would
not purposely liue in the least allowance of
the least sinne, for all the World. But yet they
doe so?

Ob.

Sol.

1. Cor. 13.
προαυξηθη εν
τιμι, &c.

First, if vpright, they doe not so; if they
doe so, they bee not vpright: indeed the most
vpright knowes but in part, loues but in part; he
may sinne, because he knowes it not to be sinne;
hee may sinne againe, being surprized in some
one particular, *Gal. 6.* against his generall pur-
pose. Thirdly, hee may be yoakt as Saint *Paul*
was, with those inward buffetings that may make
his heart ake, and his soule to crie out; *O wret-*
ched man that I am, who shall deliuer me from the
bodie of this death? Rom. 7. But if thou thinkest
that any vpright man can thus resolute, I doe or
may know, this course I liue in, to be sinfull, and
yet I must not, I will not take notice of it, make
conscience of it, thou erreest; a godly man can-
not thus sinne, and resolute. Secondly, whoso
doth, deceiues himselfe, *Iames 1.* If any man
seeme religious, and makes not conscience of e-
uery sinne (euen to a word) he deceiues himselfe;
be not thou so deceiued.

Vers 26.

Ob.

But Conscience is like the eye; if one begin
to salue it, or to meddle with it, there is no
end,

and to vse a good Conscience. 9

end, a man shall neuer enioy himselfe, but there will be scruple vpon scruple, feare after feare, sinne vpon sinne; tis an endlesse taske to purge the Conscience. I answer,

First, the question is not, how painefull it is, but how needfull: there is smart and trouble in searching wounds, yet they must bee searched.

Sol.

Secondly, the matter is feizable: *S. Paul* by trauell may arriue at this happy hauen, first, I haue a cleere; secondly, I haue a good Conscience.

Thirdly, dead flesh is not the best flesh, nor conscience awakened, the worst conscience.

Fourthly, though Physike for the time stirre humours, and playsters cause smart, yet both that and this tend to health and ease: so thinke of the present troubles and fits of conscience.

O, but hee that will stand on Conscience in *Obiect.* this age, shal dye a begger, or be begd for a foole, be shall haue trickes enow put vpon him, if he be so tender?

I answer, first, what if it were so? a man had better fast than eate poyson; begge, starue, pine, than sell his conscience: Aske them in Hell, aske them that are vpon this racke, they will say so: as for disgrace, I had rather haue all the world call mee foole, than mine own conscience; and conscience will befoole mee, if I sell heauen for earth, kernels for shells, pearles for pibbles. But, secondly, what necessity in this consequence!

C

quence? Why may not truth, and innocencie, and conscience, maintaine and credit me, as well as lying, coosenage, flattery, basenesse? Why should not I thinke Gods wayes as good as Satans? Thirdly, What lost *Abraham, Ioseph, Daniel, Mordecai, David, &c.* by keeping a good conscience? Verily, if a godly man do not thriue, conscience is not in fault: let him rather fault (if there be a fault) improuidence, idlenesse, pride, distrust mixture of ill meanes, not conscience.

Obiect.

But many that made as little adoe about conscience as I doe, haue made a good end at last; they haue dyed without feares, or if troubled a little, vpon some satisfaction made, and some charitable vvorkes done; all was husht, and well.

Sol.

I answer, first; thou knowest not what conscience others made in life. Secondly, Thou knowest not what secret pinches Conscience giues them on their death-bed. Thirdly, Its one thing to satisfie after sinne committed: another, to sinne purposely, in presuming vpon future pardons and satisfactions. Fourthly, a bleeding vvound is better than that that bleedes not. Fifthly, Some men goe crying to Heaven, some goe laughing and sleeping to Hell; the question is not what conscience feelles most, but what is most sicke? Some Consciences as well as men, lye speechlesse before departure. Those are but poore shifts to put off thoughts of conscience,
vpon

vpon these grounds, yet this is the first errour.

A second sort; They labour the matter of Conscience much, but how? Their worke is not to perswade their owne hearts with Saint *Paul*, but other mens. A strange folly, for a man to be more carefull of others than himselfe; to feare others, to prize others aboue himselfe: yet this is ordinarie: Men study rather to seeme, than to bee conscionable; labour more to approue themselves to others; than to their owne hearts; and this appeares thus: First, in that they stand more vpon the forme, than the power of godlineesse. Secondly, in that they set the best side outward, be more in profession than in action; better abroad than at home; as farre off than at hand. To these I say but this: First, this is but *Machiauels* Diuinitie: They haue not so learned *CHRIST*. Secondly, this is but the Hypocrites guise; He makes cleane the outside, he iustifies himselfe before men onely. Thirdly, this is but a chilles part, who makes his mother beleue that his sores heale, when they rankle, and shewes his right hand for his left. Lastly, this is a poore remedie, to couer a broken arme with a braue scarfe: Alas, thou must answere Conscience, when all friends bee absent: time will be, when Death will snatch thee from men, and Conscience will follow thee to *CHRISTS* barre; then if thou canst not stand before thine owne heart, how wilt thou stand

*Satis est principem externa
specie pium —
Videri, &c. de
prin. s. 18.*

before him, who is greater than thy heart ? Poore man, poore man ! thou maist easily deceiue men, possibly deceiue thy selfe : but if thou canst not approue thy heart to God, thou art lost ; for him thou canst not deceiue. As for those who make bold to father all vpon Conscience, and vpon God, who wipe their impudent mouthes with the Harlot, and say, What haue we done ? Who appeales to God with innocent *David* and *Paul*, *Iudge me, O Lord* : I lie not, my conscience beareth witnesse, God knowes my heart : I take on my conscience, that I am vniustly slandered, when tis neither so, nor so ; what will become of these men ? with what faces wil they looke vpon that conscience, that Iudge, whom they haue made partakers, witnesses, Iudges, reuengers of their damned hypocrisie, and more than diuellish impudency ! But leaue them to the rack.

3

The third sort perswade themselues of their integrity, and speake it out with *Pauls* confidence, *Wee haue a good Conscience*. But would their confidence were as well bottomed as his : but alas, Men build this their assurance either in the ayre, are on the sands : some are perswaded without reason, some vpon very weake reason. For the first, they haue (yea that they haue) as good Consciences as any of them all. But what's their prooffe ? They are perswaded so. But vpon what reasons ? Why, they hope so. But vpon
on

on what ground? Why, their minde giues them so. First, poore men! Conscience is reflectiue, knowes its knowledge, vnderstands it selfe: Secondly, its rationall, and can giue a reason of its hopes: Thirdly, its regular, and proceedes by the rule of Scripture: Shew mee thy grounds in blacke and white, else tis fancie, not Conscience.

Secondly, others alledge reason, but they cannot perswade a reasonable man who is not willing to winke; they are chiefly these:

First, a good meaning: I am (saith the ignorant) no Scholer, many can put me downe with words, and doe make a greater noyse, but I meane as well, and haue as good an heart to God-ward, as any of them all?

I answer, There is a latitude and measure of knowledge required of all, *Without some knowledge, the minde is not good, Prou. 19. 2.* If the eye be starke blinde, the whole man, and the wayes of man are so too; and to speake of Conscience without knowledge, is to speake of contradictions, and to talke of seeing without sight, hearing without eares; such is knowledge without knowledge, that is, Conscience. Tis certaine, Conscience reaches no further than knowledge, at least than habituall, and implicite, or generall knowledge. The confidences of an ignorant are but the fruits of his pride, and his scruples, the issues of his trembling opinion and

14 *Directions how to get, to keepe,*

staggering iudgement : tis true, weake knowledge (ioined with humility and care of growth) must not be discouraged; but who so neglects knowledge, presuming vpon Conscience, doth as if he should pull out his eyes, and trust to his hands for guidance.

Obiect.

The second Reason alleaged for their hope of Conscience, is from th: troubles that they haue in their hearts; for when they haue done amisse, their consciences be eftsoons vpon them, and will giue them no rest.

Sol.

Differences
betwixt con-
science and
conscience fro
the Text.

I answer, this may conclude some Conscience, but not necessarily *Pauls*, (that's to say) a Naturall, but not a Spirituall Conscience. The differences of which two, are wide, and for the discerning thereof;

1

First, see for what sinnes thy heart smites thee, if onely for crying staring sinnes, which the light of Nature from inward principles or outward instructions prompts; it is not the Conscience now in speech, *Paul* had a good Conscience in all things.

2

Secondly, see what reformation this trouble workes; if none, take heed, *Pauls* Conscience is ioined with (desires and) endeauours of obedience for the future.

3

Thirdly, see whence the trouble arises, whether from a contrariancie betweene sinne and thee, or betweene Conscience and paine, and punishment onely : *Pauls* conscience is troubled with

with the filth as well as guilt of sinne, and his *καλῶς* will is prest to goodnesse for its beauty.

Fourthly, see whither this trouble driues thee; *Pauls* carries him to Christians, to praier, watchfulnesse, beware: A Naturall Conscience proues a naturall man, but no more; thou canst not claime kindred of *Paul* vpon such a Conscience; with Turkes and Heathens thou maist.

4.

The third ground is this: My Conscience doth not onely checke me for what's past, but curbs and reins me in: before sinne be committed, I dare not doe as the most doe; nay, I dare not omit good duties: Should not I read, pray euery day, I could not sleepe in the night, &c. I answere:

Ob.

It must be considered; whence that feare arises; for tis certaine, that very custome and education will make a child afraid to omit his deuotions when he goes to bed: if we will establish the heart with comfort, wee must make good two things:

Sol.

First, that we worke vpon right motiues, not only because such hath beene our custome, such our education, so is the will of our Parents, &c. But because we need such helpes, God loues such seruices, and we finde strength comming vpon such performances.

I.

Secondly, that we heed the manner of performing, as well as the matters performed, not resting in the worke done, but mourning for

2.

our

16 *Directions how to get, to keepe,*

our dulnesse, distractions, coldnesse, and other failings in the doing; for this is once, there's nothing more shames and humbles an vpright man, than his ouert and slight performance of his Masters worke.

Obiect.

The third ground they settle vpon, is their peace: their sinnes doe not daunt them, nor their Consciences dampe them; all is quiet within, and they haue no doubts of their saluation.

Sol.

I answer. There is the Diuels peace, and Gods peace: there is a negatiue peace, or cessation onely of torment; and a positiue peace, or fruition of comfort. Therefore, examine first, the source and raising of thy peace: for some are quiet, because the conscience is either blinde, and sees not the sword against it, like *Balaam*; or slothfull and sleepey; and a very fore man may feele little in his sleepe; or else either feared or deluded: a deluded sense thinkes it feesles or sees what in truth it doth not; and feared flesh doth not smart like other flesh, not because it hath more life, but lesse sense: so here.

Secondly, The meanes how thou comcest by it: there is no peace but in Gods wayes; if I winne it not by prayer, digge it not out of Gods sauing wels and ordinances, finde not the Word speaking peace to my soule, I cannot haue it; our peace comes in at the eare, as the
Church

Church speakes, and out of Gods mouth ; God ^{Ps. 85. 8. & 91}
creates peace by his word and lippe, as *Esay* ^{Esa. 57. 19.}
speakes : vnlesse it beare his stampe, and haue
Holineffe to the Lord written vpon it, tis not
right, twill not passe as currant.

Thirdly, The Effects of it : holy peace workes
thankfulnesse to Christ, humility in vs, merci-
fulnesse towards bruised spirits.

The fourth ground is this ; I cannot abide *Ob.*
vnconscionablenesse in others : I can with no
patience see men goe against Conscience.

I answer, The Diuell is a great risler and ac- *Sol.*
cuser of others conscience ; but a conscionable
man is busiest at home, mildest abroad: be so,
or be nothing.

But I straine at the least sinne. So did the *Obiect.*
Pharisee: Conscience is not right, vnlesse it *Sol.*
straine at all sinne, endeauor all duty, as *Paul*
speakes in both tables; consider, compare, and
so passe sentence: and here an end of this vse:
now to Instruction.

And here would all that heare mee this day
were as Saint *Paul*, his bonds excepted: It shall
not be needfull to say much to those who
haue felt heauen and hell both in their consci-
ences, they see the difference ; as for others,
what can I say, when as men cannot beleue mee
without experience ? If they would receiue
others testimonies, they may well conceiue,
that a good conscience is beyond all created

D

goods,

goods, and a bad worse than all positive evils: for first, What so desirable to all living things, as life? What will not men part withall for life, though it be from skin to skin? yet conscience is such a thing as wise men prize above life; they will dye a thousand deaths, rather than lose conscience; and whilst they live, they live no longer than Conscience speaks peace.

Job 2. 4.

Looke vpon an experienced man, when he hath lost his peace, no meate, no place, no wealth, no company, no life is pleasant; he onely liues, because he dares not dye.

Secondly, for an ill conscience; What more terrible and hatefull to Nature, than death? yet death is sweet to a wounded Conscience, did hee thinke that death would end his torments, he would not live; nay, though he apprehends a iudgement, a hell at the heeles of death, yet many times hee rushes vpon it, and concludes, that certainly hell can be no worse, and probably better than an ill conscience.

Loe (my Bretheren) what Conscience both wayes is; one so sweet, that Heauen would be no Heauen without it: the other so bitter, that Hell is no Hell to it in the iudgement of experience. I can say no more to perswade; mee-thinkes now nothing should remaine but direction. And the way to set you in *Pauls* circumstances, is to guide you; first, to the getting: secondly, to the keeping of a good Conscience.

For

For the first, resolue first on the thing, and thus conclude; What-euer it cost me, what shift soeuer I make, I must haue a good conscience. 1 How a good Conscience is gotten. Videtur Aug. in Ps 30. &c. It is not necessary to haue wealth; a poore man may be honest here, happy hereafter. It is not necessary to haue health; a weake man may to heauen. Nay, it is not necessary that I must liue, my happinesse is not confined to this life; but tis necessary to get a good Conscience: without this, I can neither liue nor dye, be neither rich nor poore, sicke nor well; in few, I cannot subsist, I cannot be (vnlesse this be a being, to wish I neuer had beene) without a good conscience, and therefore what-euer it cost me, Ile goe to the price: thus first resolue, and this done then hearken to the means, which are these:

First, goe to the right meanes: there is but one Physician for soules and consciences, and that is God; he onely made, and hee onely remakes good Consciences; none else can come at Conscience, can take out the poyson that is there; take off the guilt that is there; and therefore we must carry our wounded soules to him, alleage his owne couenant and hand, and say; Lord, thou hast said that thou wilt take away our euill heart, and giue vs a better; now for thy truth sake make good this Word, this Scripture. This done, thou must attend his method, and run his course and diet he prescribes, and thou must follow this method:

First, make thy Conscience bright and light-some: he hath written a physick booke for conscience (no physicke booke for conscience but his) from this Booke thou must gather knowledge, for darknesse defiles the vnderstanding, as *Paul* saies, and darknesse is timorous and staggering; a man can haue no true, no positiue peace, whilst hee liues in darknesse, either all things, or nothing shall be lawfull; and where tis so, the heart cannot be comfortable, therefore to those principles that yet sticke in the soule, adde some other: adde light to light, the light of the Word to the light of Nature; for the Word is written to helpe that darknesse, and that light is so dimme and small, that wee must needs set vp another by it, else wee shall see nothing; and hee that sees nothing, enioyes nothing: therefore thou must get knowledge by reading, by deducing conclusions from Gods actions to thy selfe, by hearing and setting thy selfe, if thou be free, vnder that Ministry that deales with Consciences, that sets out God as he is, the Word as it is, sinne as it is; for then we truly know, when we know things in their owne notions and colours.

Secondly, thou must make the Conscience cleane; it must be pure and cleare, before it will be good: there stickes to the conscience of euery man naturally a great deale of guilt and filth; It is much disabled and maimed, lost
much

much of its sight and life, it hath learned to be idle, false, dumbe, &c. It hath contracted so much guilt, foulness, brawniness by trading in sinne, that there is no roome for peace, till it hath a new constitution, and be wholly refined: now the way to haue it cleansed, is to flye to blood: as in the Law all things were purified with blood, so here the blood of Christ is that, that cleanseth from all sinnee, that washeth the Conscience from dead workes; this blood is both healing, and will cloze all our fearefull gashes; and purging, and will take off all stains, and will make vs as white as Snow. O goe to this Refiner, this Fuller, this Physician, this high Priest, as the Word entitles him; nothing will serue, but his bloody sacrifice, and that will doe it; goe to him as to an All-sufficient Sauour, rest in his blood without further mixtures; plead his blood shed for sinners quite lost and vndone; beg that of God, as *Rahel* did children of her husband, Giue me blood or else I dye; apply that to thy bleeding soule, and say, I bleede; but Christ bled too for mee; my sins are bloody, and his wounds are bloody too; my blood, if spilt, cannot make God that satisfaction that his blood hath; and therefore Ile rest in his blood that speakes peace, not vengeance, as *Abels* did, and in him who quiets Consciences as well as Seas and windes *Mar. 4. 39.* Elle, as corrupt breath stains and dimmes the

Job 2. 4.

goods, and a bad worse than all positive evils: for first, What so desirable to all living things, as life? What will not men part withall for life, though it be from skin to skin? yet conscience is such a thing as wise men prize above life; they will dye a thousand deaths, rather than lose conscience; and whilst they live, they live no longer than Conscience speakes peace.

Looke vpon an experienced man, when he hath lost his peace, no meate, no place, no wealth, no company, no life is pleasant; he onely liues, because he dares not dye.

Secondly, for an ill conscience; What more terrible and hatefull to Nature, than death? yet death is sweet to a wounded Conscience, did hee thinke that death would end his torments, he would not live; nay, though he apprehends a iudgement, a hell at the heeles of death, yet many times hee rushes vpon it, and concludes, that certainly hell can be no worse, and probably better than an ill conscience.

Loe (my Bretheren) what Conscience both wayes is; one so sweet, that Heauen would be no Heauen without it: the other so bitter, that Hell is no Hell to it in the iudgement of experience. I can say no more to perswade; mee-thinkes now nothing should remaine but direction. And the way to set you in *Pauls* circumstances, is to guide you; first, to the getting: secondly, to the keeping of a good Conscience.

For

For the first, resolue first on the thing, and thus conclude; What-euer it cost me, what shift soeuer I make, I must haue a good conscience. 1 How a good Conscience is gotten. Vidiatur Aug. in Ps 30. &c. It is not necessary to haue wealth; a poore man may be honest here, happy hereafter. It is not necessary to haue health; a weake man may to heauen. Nay, it is not necessary that I must liue, my happinesse is not confined to this life; but tis necessary to get a good Conscience: without this, I can neither liue nor dye, be neither rich nor poore, sicke nor well; in few, I cannot subsist, I cannot be (vnlesse this be a being, to wish I neuer had beene) without a good conscience, and therefore what-euer it cost me, Ile goe to the price: thus first resolue, and this done then hearken to the means, which are these:

First, goe to the right meanes: there is but one Physician for soules and consciences, and that is God; he onely made, and hee onely remakes good Consciences; none else can come at Conscience, can take out the poyson that is there; take off the guilt that is there; and therefore we must carry our wounded soules to him, alleage his owne couenant and hand, and say; Lord, thou hast said that thou wilt take away our euill heart, and giue vs a better; now for thy truth sake make good this Word, this Scripture. This done, thou must attend his method, and run his course and diet he prescribes, and thou must follow this method:

First, make thy Conscience bright and light-some: he hath written a physick booke for conscience (no physicke booke for conscience but his) from this Booke thou must gather knowledge, for darknesse defiles the vnderstanding, as *Paul* saies, and darknesse is timorous and staggering; a man can haue no true, no positiue peace, whilst hee liues in darknesse, either all things, or nothing shall be lawfull; and where tis so, the heart cannot be comfortable, therefore to those principles that yet sticke in the soule, adde some other: adde light to light, the light of the Word to the light of Nature; for the Word is written to helpe that darknesse, and that light is so dimme and small, that wee must needs set vp another by it, else wee shall see nothing; and hee that sees nothing, enioyes nothing: therefore thou must get knowledge by reading, by deducing conclusions from Gods actions to thy selfe, by hearing and setting thy selfe, if thou be free, vnder that Ministry that deales with Consciences, that sets out God as he is, the Word as it is, sinne as it is; for then we truly know, when we know things in their owne notions and colours.

Secondly, thou must make the Conscience cleane; it must be pure and cleare, before it will be good: there stickes to the conscience of euery man naturally a great deale of guilt and filth; It is much disabled and maimed, lost much.

much of its sight and life, it hath learned to be idle, false, dumbe, &c. It hath contracted so much guilt, foulness, brawniness by trading in sinne, that there is no roome for peace, till it hath a new constitution, and be wholly refined: now the way to haue it cleansed, is to flye to bloud: as in the Law all things were purified with bloud, so here the bloud of Christ is that, that cleanseth from all sinnee, that washeth the Conscience from dead workes; this bloud is both healing, and will cloze all our fearefull gashes; and purging, and will take off all stains, and will make vs as white as Snow. O goe to this Refiner, this Fuller, this Physician, this high Priest, as the Word entitles him; nothing will serue, but his bloody sacrifice, and that will doe it; goe to him as to an All-sufficient Sauour, rest in his bloud without further mixtures; plead his bloud shed for sinners quite lost and vndone; beg that of God, as *Rahel* did children of her husband, Giue me bloud or else I dye; apply that to thy bleeding soule, and say, I bleede; but Christ bled too for mee; my sins are bloody, and his wounds are bloody too; my bloud, if spilt, cannot make God that satisfaction that his bloud hath; and therefore Ile rest in his bloud that speakes peace, not vengeance, as *Abels* did, and in him who quiets Consciences as well as Seas and windes *Mar. 4. 39*. Elle, as corrupt breath staines and dimmes the

glasse: so a corrupt heart the Conscience. Next, when it is cleare from guilt and filth, then it must be pure and sanctified; the Spirit therefore of Grace must rest in the Conscience, and giue it a new constitution; it is not sufficient to let out the bad blood, but now wee must breed good blood, and make new Spirits. From a naturall Conscience, and a Conscience that is enlightned by the Word, we must proceed to a sanctified Conscience, and therefore we must labour to feele the power of Christs Blood, and of Christs Life and Resurrection in our soules, (who is King of righteousness and peace both, *Heb. 7. 2.*) quickning vs in the Inner man, and stamping on vs our first imprese of wisdom, holinesse, righteousness, that we may be throughout sanctified, *1 Thes. 5.* and have a beauty set vpon the soule and conscience in all points, as the Apostle sayes, and freed from dead workes by repentance, *Heb. 9.* and when the Conscience is filled in some due measure with light, and freed from sinne, and furnished with positiue grace, then (out of all) results that goodnesse of Conscience that now we speake of, whereby its fitted for its ends and offices, and enabled to giue vs a good word and countenance.

^a How tis kept.

Now for the keeping of Conscience good, because I will not ouercharge your memories with rules, Ile expresse my selfe in one continued
 Similitude

Similitude or Allegory. The Conscience is a Clock or Watch in the bosome; look what you would doe to keep that in frame, that must be done heere.

First, if the Watch be amisse, who so fit to amend it as hee that made it? So heere, if any thing trouble Conscience, that it goes not at all, or too fast, or out of order, goe to Christ, and goe quickly, pray him to set thee in ioynt againe, as *Dauid* did, *Psal.* 51.

Secondly, a Watch must be charily kept, the least dust, hayre, iogge almost distempers it; so the Conscience, a little dust in this eye marres both sight and peace, a little sinne crept in betweene the wheelles, sets all at a stand: if euer thy Conscience shall hold its comfort, and doe thee acceptable seruice, keepe it cleane, giue no allowance to any the least sinne: a man may liue and dye in some sinne, and yet haue peace, when Conscience is not priuy to it, and not conuincd of it: But there can bee no true comfort, where sinne vnderhand is maintained and allowed, be it neuer so small a one: let thy Conscience haue this to say for thee: I can beare him witnesse, that he bore his finnes as a burden, and bid none of them welcome.

Thirdly, a watch must be daily lookt to (and thorowly too) if one pin be amisse, all is out of order: so the Conscience; hee that makes not conscience of all (according to his light) makes con-

24 *Directions how to get, to keepe,*

conscience of none, and wil come to naught; and he that doth not looke vpon his conscience euery day, and wynde it vp, and set it in frame, will haue no conscience in time: euery day thou must talke with thy selfe, and know what the Watch saith, I meane, what report Conscience makes of thy dayes worke, what it hath to say for or against thee. Tis with conscience, as with Bayliffs and Stewards; if you call them to a daily reckoning, they will bee carefull and vsfull; but if you let things runne on, and reckon once at the hundreds end, they will not watch, or they will not be able to remember: so tis with conscience; therefore often looke vpon it, and euery day consult with it.

The Watch must be vsed, else it rusts, furies, and first beginnes to slack its pace, after some time wil not goe at all: so conscience, tis preserved by vse, as the stomacke is, and all things else; for euery thing is perfected and preserved by its proper operations: as water is kept sweet by running, the Conscience by motion strengthens its sense, and sooner feeles its weight: by motion it is facilitated, and thats as good as oyle to the wheele of a Clocke; therefore exercise Conscience, and that in all good duties, whether personall or locall.

Conscience must haue its full walke, and thats very large; for a Conscience is to bee obserued in all Religious and Righteous

ous acts; and who so will preferue his conscience, must first keep himselfe pure and vpright. First, in Gods worship : Secondly, in workes of righteousnesse towards man : Thirdly, in his owne place, he must make conscience of his particular calling and relation, and dwell vpon that : and secondly, for others, hee must remember *Pauls* aduice; Keepe thy selfe pure, be not partaker of other mens sinnes. In short, of all things hee must feare God most; of all men, feare himselfe most and his owne Conscience; of all men out of himselfe, feare his friends most, and his other-mens sinnes. Many a man washes his heart at home, and defiles his Conscience abroad; when he hath gotten his own acquittance, hee intangles himselfe in other mens debts by conniueance, silence, consent, &c. Take heed of this, for tis a hard matter to discharge conscience in company and to come off well. Well, let conscience haue its perfect worke towards God and man, alone, and in companie, and like a good fountaine, twill worke out its owne corruption and mudde, and affoord something towards the washing of others too, as it runnes along.

One thing more, and then an end : As a Watch must be made, so set by rule : you must set it by the Sunne and time of day : So Conscience must haue its rule (though a subordinate rule it selfe) and this also must be set and orde-

E

red

26 *Directions how to get, to keepe, &c.*

red by the Heauens : the great God hath only power ouer his great office, and he in his Word is the iust measure of it : wee must not say that's lawfull which he prohibits, that's sinfull which he commands, that's arbitrary which hee holds necessary, that's necessary (for its nature) which he holds arbitrary : in short, we must neither widen nor straiten the rule, but bring home our selues to that. Its hard to say where we shall land, if we faile not by the Compasse, and looke not to the Heauens, and whether bee worse to swallow all, or scruple all, is more than I can tell. This is once, he that either tyes vp, or lets out his Conscience, more than God would haue him, makes worke for himselfe, and way for temptation. In practice, tis good to bee of the restraining hand, where we are left to our selues : but for Opinion, Conscience, and Iudgement, tis best to hold ones selfe free where the Word frees him, and bound, where the Word bindes him, else Conscience will suffer wracke.

THE



THE SECOND SERMON:

*Wherein is taught how to use a good
CONSCIENCE.*

H E B. 13. 18.

*Pray for us, for we trust we have a good Conscience
in all things, willing to live honestly.*



THE second thing fol-
lowes. P A V L hauing
gotten a good Consci-
ence, improues it, and
makes his benefit of it,
partly for the remoo-
uing of aspersions, part-
ly for the obtaining of
prayers, and the en-
gratiating of himselfe with the *Hebrewes*. The
Point,

E 2

They

Doct. 2.

Esf. 1 & 2.

Psal. 4. 4.

1 Cor. 11. &.

3 Cor. 13. & c.

They that haue good Consciences must make their vse of them. This point calls more for practice than for prooffe; therefore we will bee larger there, briefer heere. First, God calls vs to this duty, *Esfay. 5. 3. Iudge, yee inhabitants, &c.* as if he had said, I appeale to your Consciences who will be of vse in this case to you, if you will vse them: so *Haggai*, Consider, saith God, with your selues, compare time with time, thing with thing, how well you shall speed if you will be ruled by me, how ill you haue sped whilest negligent of me: and accordingly resolue, as if hee had said, If you would but reflect vpon your selues, and consult your owne Consciences, reformation would follow. So also *Psal. 4.* Talke with your owne hearts; as if he should say, Doe but aske your owne Consciences? Is not this Gods doing? Did not God preferre *Dauid*? Doth not hee maintaine his Titles? Would wee our selues reape that measure that we offer him? And then ye will be quiet. Thus often in the new Testament: Examine your selues, Iudge your selues, Trie your selues, Be-thinke your selues: *Reuel. 2.* All comes to this, Turne your thoughts vpon your selues, and make vse of your inward light, that is, Conscience. Thus the precept is cleare, the practice thereof much vrged, the neglect thereof, as much condemned, *Ier. 8. 6.* and else-where often.

Adde

Adde secondly, to the Precept of God, the practice of Gods people, in their passages with God and Man.

First, For God: Marke *Abimelech*, when he was hazarded; *Gen. 20.* *Jeremiah*, when he was cursed; *Ier, 15.* *Hezekiah*, when he was visited; *Esay. 38.* *David*, when he was slandered, *Psal. 7.* The Apostles, *Acts 4.* when threatned; and see what vse they made of a good Conscience. How free, quiet, bold, couragious in all those exigents they were.

Secondly, and for Men, looke vpon *Ioseph*, first tempted, after persecuted: vpon *Samuel* rejected, vpon *Iob* traduced, vpon *Paul* arraigned; and see what benefit they made of Conscience, now to raigne in lusts and passions, now to pro- uoke to iust apologies, alwaies to support in greatest pressuures.

Thirdly, from Examples, passe wee to Reasons.

First, Conscience is made for vse, and there- fore vse must be made of it: *Reasons. 1.* The excellency of things stands in their vse, the best things being euer most vsefull; now in this world there is nothing more Diuine, and (as I may say) more God-like than Conscience. It is a kinde of secondary Law and Bible, yea in a sort, a subordinate God, of subdiuine authority. It hath power to enforme, to record, to witnesse, to iudge, to condemne, to absolue, to comfort,

26 *Directions how to get, to keepe, &c.*

red by the Heauens : the great God hath only power ouer his great office, and he in his Word is the iust measure of it : wee must not say that's lawfull which he prohibits, that's sinfull which he commands, that's arbitrary which hee holds necessary, that's necessary (for its nature) which he holds arbitrary : in short, we must neither widen nor straiten the rule, but bring home our selues to that. Its hard to say where we shall land, if we faile not by the Compasse, and looke not to the Heauens, and whether bee worse to swallow all, or scruple all, is more than I can tell. This is once, he that either tyes vp, or lets out his Conscience, more than God would haue him, makes worke for himselfe, and way for temptation. In praetice, tis good to bee of the restraining hand, where we are left to our selues : but for Opinion, Conscience, and Iudgement, tis best to hold ones selfe free where the Word frees him, and bound, where the Word binde him, else Conscience will suffer wracke.

THE



THE SECOND SERMON:

Wherein is taught how to use a good
CONSCIENCE.

H E B. 13. 18.

*Pray for vs, for we trust we haue a good Conscience
in all things, willing to liue honestly.*



THE second thing fol-
lowes. PAVL hauing
gotten a good Consci-
ence, improues it, and
makes his benefit of it,
partly for the remoo-
uing of aspersions, part-
ly for the obtaining of
prayers, and the en-
gratiating of himselfe with the *Hebrewes*. The
Point,

E 2

They

Doct. 2.

Ez. 1 & 2.

Psal. 4. 4.

1 Cor. 11. &.

2 Cor. 13. & c.

They that haue good Consciences must make their vse of them. This point calls more for practice than for prooffe ; therefore we will bee larger there, briefer heere. First, God calls vs to this duty, *Esay. 5. 3. Iudge, yee inhabitants, &c.* as if he had said, I appeale to your Consciences who will be of vse in this case to you, if you will vse them : so *Haggai*, Consider, saith God, with your selues, compare time with time, thing with thing, how well you shall speed if you will be ruled by me, how ill you haue sped whilest negligent of me : and accordingly resolute, as if hee had said, If you would but reflect vpon your selues, and consult your owne Consciences, reformation would follow. So also *Psal. 4.* Talke with your owne hearts ; as if he should say, Doe but aske your owne Consciences ? Is not this Gods doing ? Did not God preferre *Dauid* ? Doth not hee maintaine his Titles ? Would wee our selues reape that measure that we offer him ? And then ye will be quiet. Thus often in the new Testament : Examine your selues, Iudge your selues, Trie your selues, Be-thinke your selues : *Reuel. 2.* All comes to this, Turne your thoughts vpon your selues, and make vse of your inward light, that is, Conscience. Thus the precept is cleare, the practice thereof much vrged, the neglect thereof, as much condemned, *Ier. 8. 6.* and else-where often.

Adde

Adde secondly, to the Precept of God, the practice of Gods people, in their passages with God and Man.

First, For God: Marke *Abimelech*, when he was hazarded; *Gen. 20.* *Jeremiah*, when he was cursed; *Ier, 15.* *Hezekiah*, when he was visited; *Esay. 38.* *David*, when he was slandered, *Psal. 7.* The Apostles, *Acts 4.* when threatned; and see what vse they made of a good Conscience. How free, quiet, bold, couragious in all those exigents they were.

Secondly, and for Men, looke vpon *Ioseph*, first tempted, after persecuted: vpon *Samuel* reiected, vpon *Iob* traduced, vpon *Paul* arraigned; and see what benefit they made of Conscience, now to raigne in lusts and passions, now to pro- uoke to iust apologies, alwaies to support in greatest pressures.

Thirdly, from Examples, passe wee to Reasons.

First, Conscience is made for vse, and there- fore vse must be made of it: The excellency of things stands in their vse, the best things being euer most vsefull; now in this world there is nothing more Diuine, and (as I may say) more God-like than Conscience. It is a kinde of secondary Law and Bible, yea in a sort, a subordinate God, of subdiuine authority. It hath power to enforme, to record, to witnesse, to iudge, to condemne, to absolue, to comfort,

Reasons. 1.

to execute, to hang and draw within it selfe, as we speake in other cases; and we cannot without too too great neglect of God, who makes nothing in vaine, passe by such an Officer and Deputy as Conscience is, without vse and acknowledgement.

Secoridly, we take Gods Name in vaine, in neglecting Conscience, and frustrate his work, and depriue our selues of the benefits of Conscience: for tis not the hauing, but the vsing of abilities and blessings, that perfects and blesses vs. A power of seeing is to little purpose, if men will winke and hide themselues in darke-nesse. A power of speaking is not much, if a man will button vp his lippes: and of as little auaille is Conscience (that is, a power of knowing and gaging ones selfe) if this power bee neuer acted. Verily, a man notwithstanding this inward light, may be no better than an Atheist in knowledge, or Diuell in practice, vnlesse hee improue his light; (for light, till the Will put it to vse, makes no man good) for doe but consider: How (I pray) shall that soule for matters past euer repent, which will neuer recoyle, look backward, or once say, What haue I done? How (againe) shall it see its present staines and estate, if it will not view it selfe, or behold its owne face? How (thirdly) shall it be held backe from any sin (flesh, men, diuels pushing on) if it neuer commune with it selfe, saying, What

What am I doing? It were impossible that men should either digest such morsels as they swallow, or swallow such puddle and poyson's effoones they doe, would they but see and consider what they doe, or haue done.

Thirdly, by not vsing Conscience, wee shall come in time to lose, not onely the comfortable seruice of it (for information, reformation, consolation, instigation, &c.) but indeed all manner vse, and sense of it: Vse legges (wee say) and haue legges; so, vse Conscience, and haue Conscience; for by vse, the heart is kept soft and will soone smite vs, as *Dauids* did: by vse our inward light is exercised and strengthened, and wee made able to discern, *Heb. 5. 14.* Nay, vse and exercise doth both facilitate and delight; for what's done ordinarily and habitually, is done with no small content, sure with no great contention and reluctancy: custome and exercise make the hardest of workes at least sufferable. On the other side, disuse Conscience, and though it continue in the roote, yet the fruit will downe. First, the light of it will more and more decay, like the fire that is not blowne. Secondly, the life of it will also weare, (as the dull sluggard liues not halfe so much as the diligent doth) and this appeares, if we consider those acts and euidences of life (Sense and Motion.) For Sense, a Conscience vnconsulted, vnexercised, vnexamined, becomes like a
sleepy

sleepy legge : when a man hath sate long, hee feeles not his limbes, the bloud and spirits being sometimes frozen and arrested with cold, sometimes intercepted in their passage by too much suppression of that part : so tis with the Conscience ; first load it, and then let it lye still without motion, and in fine it will not feele it selfe, but bee as dead and senselesse, as brawned, yea seared flesh : And this experience iustifies in many, whose consciences lye bedridden : and looke how some (in that case of sicknesse) voyd much filth and feele it not : so these spue forth abhorred blasphemies and outrages, and discerne them not. As for Motion, euen as the limbs by long sitting grow stiffe and starke, that wee cannot goe : so the conscience vnfrequented, twill rust like a Clock which sleepe a winter or two, and so loses its tongue, not once telling you where you bee either in the day or night : iust so a rusty Conscience, twill neither counsell nor comfort, checke nor excuse, twill speake neither to matters past nor to come, but lie as dead within a man, as the dead childe doth within a woman : Ohtis a most comfortlesse thing for a liuing woman to beare death in her bowels ! such a burden fills her with many feares for the present, at least makes her too too heauy and vnweildy, and puts her to great extremity in the cloze, there being more adoe with one dead birth, than with two
liuing

liuing children : tis no better with a dead conscience ; the lesse that trauels, the more we must, with feares and anguish ; and therefore as wee call vpon women to stirre, that their fruit may be stirring too : so must we stirre vp our selues, that Conscience may be doing ; for a dead conscience makes but a dead estate, a dead heart, a dead man, a dull life ; and dead it will be, vnlesse we put it to vse.

Now before we can proceed to exhortation, *vse 1.* wee cannot but bewaile and controll two sorts of men ; first, such as vtterly disuse ; secondly, such as fearefully misuse their Consciences. How many bee there of the first sort, who liue and dye strangers to themselues ? They dare not for their eares aske their owne hearts, What is our case ? In what tearmes stand we with God ? Children are wee or enemies ? In the wayes of life or death ? Where are we ? What are wee ? Which way goe we ? What will be the issue of our courses ? But looke how bankrupts put off reckonings, so these all reasonings with themselves. And as they keepe their spirituall estate close from their owne consciences, so doe they in particular actions : for, first, in things to bee done, they rather consult others than themselves, which is, but to sell oneseies, and buy spectacles, which see no more than the eye enables them. Secondly, in things already done, they rather smother than consult conscience : when

Conscience takes the aduantage of solitarinesse, and beginnes to question them, they runne from it into company, and hide themselues in the crowde; when Conscience beginnes a little to open its eyes and mouth after the reading of some booke, the hearing of some Sermon, the feeling of some inward or outward pinches, they stoppe their cares, diuert their thoughts, sing, whistle, drinke, game, and doe any thing to out-talke and drowne Conscience. This the practice of hundreds, but how ill this practice is, first, the Causes, secondly, the Consequences will shew.

The causes of
this disuse.

The Causes hereof, First, Pride : Man would be somebody with himselfe, and therefore is loth to looke vpon his owne staines, and to see his owne face, in the face of his conscience. Secondly, Hypocrisie : Man hath such a desire to coozen, that hee would (if he could) coozen himselfe, and would faine make himselfe beleue that tis not so bad with him, as indeed it is. Thirdly, Vnbeliefe : He lookes for no mercy, in case he peach himselfe, and therefore places all his safety in secrecy; and so secret would he be, that by his will, his left hand shall not know what his right hath done. These are the causes : and what fruit can you in reason expect from such a roote ?

The consequences.

Surely the issue cannot but bee bitter : For, First, by disusing Conscience, men come to lose

lose conscience, and consequently their armour against sinne: take away Conscience, and you can hardly set downe Atheisme. Secondly, by this meanes sinne is exceedingly aggrauated; (for no man can neglect so neere a Monitor as Conscience is, without great presumption and wilfulnesse:) and secondly, a mans reckoning no way furthered; for (doe what wee can) wee must come to an account, and Conscience will know vs at last, whether we acknowledge it or not; nay, by how much the lesse we regard it now, by so much the more it will shake vs hereafter, and rise vpon vs like a flame with so much the greater fury, by how much the more it was (for the present) kept downe and stifled.

The second sort reprobued, are such as abuse *Vses 1.* conscience; and this is done (as sometimes otherwise) so mostly thus:

First, when Conscience is set lowest; and bound apprentice to the outward man, I meane thus, when men doe not receiue all blowes that let driue at conscience, vpon their name, estate, skinne, &c. but contrarily, rather suffer Conscience to be wounded, than the outmost skinne rayfed.

Secondly, when Conscience is thrust from its seate, deposed, degraded, gag'd; so violently; that it must not speake, though friends, God, man, call vpon vs.

Thirdly, when conscience is made a cloke

for all vnwarranted, both opinions and practises, that is, when men will put the name of conscience vpon the basest things : Opinion shall bee Conscience; Errour, Conscience; the swallowing of widowes houses, Conscience; as twas with the Pharisees.

4

Fourthly, when Conscience is made a knight of the poast, and must beare witnesse to any vntruth, to any villanie : thus when men cannot tell what to say, they appeale to God and Conscience. God knowes their hearts, their Conscience beares them witnesse, they'le take it on their Conscience, tis so, not so. O the fearefulness of these practises! how terrible haue Gods strokes bin vpon such in all ages? and what can wee looke for lesse, than misery in this course? First, a man must bee an old and bold offender, before he can dare thus to affront Conscience. Secondly, it cannot be safe thus to abuse so great an Officer as conscience is. Thirdly, who can expresse the terrours of some Saints, now vpon record, who (notwithstanding) neuer were so daring? and if they did sweate vnder smaller abuses of Conscience, how shall these bleed?

Vse 2.

I now come to perswade euery man to make good vse of a good thing, a good Conscience; for the abuse of best things is euer worst: and a good Conscience is in the ranke of best things. It is a wonderfull mercy in God, to match vs with so neere a friend, so true a Counsellor: let

vs

vs thankfully consider to what vses a good conscience may bee put, and accordingly improve it. Wee will not runne into the road of conscience in generall, but confine our selues to a good Conscience, which is so tearmed in a double sense:

First, Its good formally in its constitution.

Conscience
how tearmed
good.

Secondly, effectiue in its execution: as a Clocke is good when it is made well and goes well: first, the Conscience is good in its selfe, when it is fitted for its proper acts and vses: the proper and immediate act and vse of Conscience, is to know that it knowes, as *Salomon* speakes to *Shimei*, and as wee vulgarly say, I know what I know well enough. This the generall. The particulars of this knowledge are, first, conscience knowes what we be: secondly, what we doe: what we be spiritually (not naturally) and in what tearmes we stand with God; whether we beare his Image, be in his fauour, yea, or no: what wee doe either for substance or quality, good or bad, either in times past, present, or to come: these things Conscience was made for, and these the conscience, when it is good, doth know, to wit, both tree and fruit in the inward and outward acts thereof: and hence it is, that wee are so often inuited to talke with our selues; and hereof growes that inward confidence and enioyment, that the soule hath of it selfe, wherein it resembles its Maker, who

takes full contentment in himselfe from his full vnderstanding of himselfe. The second act of a good Conscience is speaking or manifesting good to vs; being good in it selfe, it giues vs due information touching our selues; as a cleere glasse represents a true face: and heere are two acts also: First and more immediately, it reports things as they be, which is called witnessing or giuing in euidence: thus the person being vnder mercy tels him so much, hauing already done well, or hauing good things in agitation, it saith so.

Contrarily, when things be not right, Conscience speakes as it finds them, and heerein it doth well; for we speake of a Morall, not Naturall good: and morally that Conscience is good, that speakes the truth how-euer it bee: as that's a good glasse that reports blemishes (if such) as well as beauries; a good Witnessle that speakes the truth, though not what pleases. Secondly, Conscience strikes vpon the affections, and doth some execution vpon the offender; for from information of estate, arises either certainty of hope or despaire: as the euidence comes in guilty or not guilty, and from information of workes, different affections and motions answerable to their different natures: from things well done, comes comfort, ioy, boldnesse, &c. ill done, shame, feare, sorrow, remorse: from things well intended, courage, resolution, confidence,

fidence, &c. ill meant, (for the future) iealousie, repining, recoyling, as an horse that would and would not leape a ditch. In the former respect, Conscience is compared to a Witnesse, in this, to a Iudge and executioner.

Now this being the vse of Conscience; wee must employ it to these vses; namely, repaire to Conscience, aske its aduice, receiue its report touching our persons and actions, heare what it can say for or against vs now; for once it must passe a verdict vpon vs; and when we haue its testimony, wee must either appeale to an higher Court (if we can shew an errour) or sit downe by its sentence, stop, where it sayes stop; worke, where it sayes worke; feare, where it saies feare; hope, where giues it hope; restore, where it sayes restore.

Howbeit, that our speech may be more fruitfull, know wee that in foure cases especially, we are to consult and use Conscience.

VWhen and in what cases conscience must most be consulted.

First, when we are in consultation about things to bee done, or beleeued; in this case it is not amisse to aduise with others, but in no case must Conscience be omitted.

I may easily deceiue others by ill stating of the question, adding, or altering, or suppressing, as affection leads me: againe, a man may finde so many men, so many mindes oftentimes, so different are their apprehensions and affections. But a good conscience is one and the same, and

and that vprightly consulted, can say more to my affections and intentions, more to the practicall part, than all the world.

Therefore vse others if you please, but make vse of your owne hearts, else your practice may be corrupt, when others counsell is good. Here forget not these rules: First, pretend not Conscience, where Conscience is not the matter. Secondly, be resolu'd of what thou doest in thy selfe, or else forbear till taught, if thou mayest. Thirdly, walke by thine owne light, not other mens ; ground thy practice vpon Conscience, Conscience vpon Word, not vpon Man. As for cases here incident, we passe them now.

2

Secondly, when we are vpon a selfe-triall, and the question is either of our state, or our doings, or opinions, consult conscience ; for that is the best created examiner. And here let the maine worke be, to finde out the maine point ; Am I Godschilde, in state of grace, yea or no ? This much imports vs ; for as Satan founds all particular temptations vpon this (If thou be the sonne of God ;) so all our particular comforts and assurances hang on this pinne. Therefore, here, houer not, but hold Conscience to it, Either I am, or am not Gods. What am I ? What am I ? Leaue not this vnresolued by Conscience, as many doe, who hearing of a certainty attainable, and of some generall notes of saluation from the Word ; presently build confidence

dence to themselves, sometimes vpon weak principles, sometimes vpon false applications, neuer consulting Conscience, and then when Conscience is awakened, they are miserably plunged. Beloued, it is not so easie a matter to assure saluation as most men thinke; wee are not all out of their minds, who deny it possible without extraordinary reuelations, and who hold it sawcynesse to auouch it; yet wee must tell you, that the difficulties are more than a few, and it concerns vs much, to deale much with Conscience about this point.

For faith whereby we beleeeue saluation is one thing, and euidence whereby wee feelee it another; there we must cleaue to the promise, but here we must confer with Conscience, as *S. Paul* doth, he was strongly perswaded (by the Iesuities leaue) of his saluation and vprightnesse: but what are his grounds? First, his Conscience was and had been good in all: Secondly, his bent and resolution for the future was right; hence he did, hence we must assure our estates.

Secondly, as wee must examine Conscience about our estate, so also about actions past; was this well? did I well? said I well? otherwise there may be deceit: For first, many matters lye hid from men, with their circumstance: secondly, the motiues that set the wheele a going vlually doe; here then happy is he who condemnes not himselfe in what he hath done.

G

Thirdly,

Thirdly, when slandered, censured, or accused, whether by men or diuels. Thus *Iob*, when Satan accuseth, when friends doe, foes do, when good men doe, and bad men doe, hee repaires homeward, casts vp his bookes, and finding all right, he triumphs in his Conscience, and weares their libels as a Crowne. Like vse must wee make of our Consciences; when accused; first, see whether the charge be iust; if so, reforme, amend: Secondly, if not so, cleare thy selfe to men, if worth while, and if they will be satisfied; if not, enioy thy selfe, and thine owne innocencie. Here the rules be two: first, if thine owne heart condemne thee, reioice not against the truth, though all the world applaud thee: Secondly, if (vpon a true search) thy heart acquit thee, neuer forsake thine owne innocency: Let not men, nor diuels, nor frownes, nor censures robbe thee of thy comfort, but set this wall of brasse against all, as *Paul*. Say what you will, my conscience is good; and I make this good by these and these proofes.

Fourthly, when wee become suters to God and man for assistance, being affronted by men and diuels, and seemingly deserted of God and man, then we must flye to Conscience, as *Paul* doth, and *Dauid*, and all the Saints; now calling vpon God; as *Hezekiah*, *O Lord, thou knowest I haue walked, &c.* Now vpon Christians, as *Paul*, *Pray for me, for I haue kept a, &c.* Now vpon our selues,

selues, with *Dauid, Why art thou cast downe, O my soule, &c.* There is truth in thee, beare vp. And this not onely for the present, but for future times, when we are threatned as the Apostles were, with many stormes, with much hardship: first, make good thy Conscience: secondly, rest in the comfort thereof; for come what will come, if we bring a good conscience to a good cause, these two bladders will hold our heads about water. My brethren, till wee haue tryed, we cannot conceiue what the comfort, courage, strength and resolution of a good conscience is; make vse of it, enioy it, and enioy your selues, your estate, all persons, all things, all times; onely be sure; first, that Conscience be regular, that is, that it speake Law, and sentences all according to the Word written. Secondly, that it speake the whole truth written, and nothing but the truth: Conscience hath nothing to doe with secret counsels, that must speake to the action or present estate; but for reprobation or finall destruction, that conscience can say nothing to, as not reuealed; it hath nothing to doe either with absolute condemnation, or absolution. Let it keepe it selfe within its Spheare, and let me keepe my selfe to my time.

FINIS.

